

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as specified below:

1. (currently amended) A method for adding identifying keywords to images stored within a database, comprising the steps of:

comparing a new image provided by a user to images stored in a database;
and

automatically offering a user a set of keywords associated with stored images that most closely match the new image that is based on image comparison results derived from said step of comparing, wherein said offering is based on the time of entry for the similar images and the number of occurrences of similar images when compared to the new image that have been historically processed by the database as indicated by database statistics provided by a database statistics module wherein the database statistics module is not part of the database.

2.(original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of enabling the user to either accept keywords contained in the offer or enter alternative keywords for the new image.

3.(original) The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of storing at the direction of the user the new image within the database together with keywords automatically offered to the user.

4.(original) The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of storing at the direction of the user the new image within the database together with alternative keywords provided by the user.

5.(original) The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of historically updating the database by recording said storing of the new image within the database together with keywords automatically offered to the user as another occurrence associated with similar images historically processed by the database including updating the time of said storage.

6.(original) The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of historically updating the database by recording said storing of the new image within the database together with alternative keywords provided by the user as a new image occurrence processed by the database including updating the time of said storage

7.(original) The method of claim 2 wherein a user's selection to store a new image having alternative keywords will provide the user with data entry fields associated with database storage processes for the entry of alternative keywords into the database wherein the data entry fields accept alternative keywords associated with the new image being entered by the user.

8.(original) The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of storing at the direction of the user the new image within the database together with the alternative keywords.

9.(original) The method of claim 8 including a step wherein new subgroups are generated after the step of storing the new image and alternative keywords within the database.

10. (currently amended) A method for adding identifying keywords to images stored within a database, comprising:

(a) comparing a new image provided by a user to images stored in a database;

(b) automatically offering a user a set of keywords associated with stored images that most closely match the new image that is based on database statistics provided by a database statistics module and on image comparison as provided in step (a) wherein the database statistics module is not part of the database; and

(c) enabling the user to either accept keywords contained in the offer or to enter alternative keywords for the new image.

11.(original) The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of storing at the direction of the user the new image within the database together with keywords automatically offered to the user.

12.(original) The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of storing at the direction of the user the new image together with alternative keywords provided by the user within the database.

13.(original) The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of historically updating the database by recording said storing of the new image within the database together with keywords automatically offered to the user as another

occurrence associated with similar images historically processed by the database including updating the time of said storage.

14.(original) The method of claim 12 further comprising the step of historically updating the database by recording said storing of the new image and the alternative keywords within the database as a new image occurrence processed by the database including updating the time of said storage.

15.(original) The method of claim 14 wherein a user's selection to store a new image having alternative keywords will provide the user with data entry fields associated with database storage processes for alternative keywords wherein the data entry fields accept new images and the alternative keywords associated provided by the user.

16.(original) The method of claim 15 further comprising the step of storing at the direction of the user the new image and the alternative keywords within the database.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 16 including a step wherein new subgroups are generated after the step of storing the new image and alternative keywords within the database.

18. (currently amended) An image database archiving system, comprising:

a database adapted for storing images;

a content-based image retrieval module in association with the database

and adapted for providing text-associated image archiving, image management and image retrieval capabilities;

a database statistics module for providing statistical data regarding the number and type of images and metadata stored in the database wherein the database statistics module is updated whenever an image is added to or removed from the database such that the database statistics module remains current and wherein the database statistics module is not part of the database; and

a user interface (UI) adapted for providing user intervention during image archiving and further enables user acceptance of system suggestions, user selection of system suggestions, and enables user entry of user-provided keywords for association with images.

19.(original) The system of claim 18 wherein the database statistics module in combination with user action at the user interface provides users control over image archiving.

20.(original) The system of claim 18 wherein the database statistics module enables historical updating of the database.